



Common Core State Standards for 9th Grade
English Language Arts and

Essential Standards for the *Occupational Course of Study*
in 11th and 12th Grade English

North Carolina Assessment Specifications
Summary

Measures of Student Learning for English Language Arts in the
Occupational Course of Study for 9th, 11th, and 12th Grade

Purpose of the Assessments

- Measures of Student Learning: North Carolina's Common Exams for English Language Arts (ELA) in the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) for *grade 9* will measure students' proficiency of the *Common Core State Standards (CCSS)* for English Language Arts, adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June 2010.
- Common Exams for English Language Arts (ELA) in the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) for grades 11 and 12 will measure students' proficiency of the *Essential Standards* in English Language Arts, adopted by the North Carolina State Board of Education in June 2010.
- Assessment results will be used in the Educational Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS) to produce growth measures to satisfy standards 6 and 8 in the North Carolina teacher evaluation system.
- Common Exams were developed to replace locally developed assessments, providing teachers and principals with a common measure for all students state-wide during a given testing window. Educators are encouraged to use Common Exam scores (along with other relevant measures) in determining the student's final grade for each course. LEAs are encouraged to adopt policies regarding the use of Common Exam results in assigning final grades.
- Assessment results will NOT be used for school and district accountability under the READY Accountability Model or for Federal reporting purposes.

Curriculum Cycle

- June 2010: North Carolina State Board of Education adoption of the *CCSS* and *Essential Standards for OCS* in grades 11 and 12.
- 2011–2012: Item development for the Common Exams in ELA for *OCS*.
- 2012–2013: Operational administration of the Common Exams in ELA for *OCS*.

Standards

- The *CCSS* are posted at: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/common-core/>. Each grade includes a set of content standards.
- The *CCSS* are divided into strands which address a specific set of College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards. These strands are reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language. Speaking and listening skills will not be measured by the Common Exams.
- The *OCS-to-CCSS-crosswalk* documents for 9th grade and the *Essential Standards* for OCS English for 11th and 12th grade are at:
<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/new-standards>.

Prioritization of Standards

- The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction invited teachers to collaborate and develop recommendations for a prioritization of the standards indicating the relative importance of each standard, the anticipated instructional time, and the appropriateness of the standard for multiple-choice (MC) and constructed response (CR) item formats. Subsequently, curriculum and test development staff from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction met to review the results from the teacher panels and to develop weight distributions across the domains for each grade level.
- Tables 1 through 3 describe the range of percentage of test questions that will appear on a given form of the high school MSL for English OCS students. The majority of the items will be MC items (89% to 92%). While the percent of CR items ranges from 8% to 11% across the tests, it is expected that the CR items will likely take approximately 25% of the available testing time; as such, CR items will be worth up to two points each.

Table 1. Test Specification Weights for the MSL for English in OCS in Grade 9

Domain	Standards	Multiple Choice	Constructed Response
Language	L4, L5	13-18%	0%
Reading for Information	RI1, 2, 4, 6	21-31%	0%
	RI3, 5	11-16%	3-6%
Reading for Literature	RL1, 2, 3, and 6	17-26%	0%
	RL4, 5	4-6%	3-6%
Total		89-92%	8-11%
<i>Total percent of score points</i>		<i>77-83%</i>	<i>17-23%</i>

Table 2. Test Specification Weights for the MSL for English in OCS in Grade 11

Standards	Multiple Choice	Constructed Response
OE3.C.1., 2, 3	25-34%	3-4%

OE3.L.1.	18-26%	0%
OE3.R.1.	5-7%	0%
OE3.T.1., 2, 3	24-33%	6-8%
Total percent of items	89-92%	8-11%
<i>Total percent of score points</i>	<i>77-83%</i>	<i>17-23%</i>

Table 3. Test Specification Weights for the MSLforEnglish in OCS in Grade 12

Standards	Multiple Choice	Constructed Response
OE4.C.1., 2	36%_to_51%	0%
OE4.C.3.	0%_to_2%	3%_to_4%
OE4.L.1.	24%_to_34%	0%_to_2%
OE4.R.1.	0%_to_2%	2%_to_2%
OE4.T.2.	12%_to_17%	3%_to_4%
Total percent of items	89-92%	8-11%
<i>Total percent of score points</i>	<i>77-83%</i>	<i>17-23%</i>

Cognitive Rigor of the 9th grade MSL in ELA for *OCS* Students

- Starting in 2012-13 school year all 10th grade *OCS* students will be required to take an ELA assessment that is aligned to the *CCSS*. Students enrolled in the *OCS* in 10th grade can take the *NCEXTEND2* English II End-of-Course Test aligned to the *CCSS* in lieu of the general end-of-course assessment. In light of this, the cognitive rigor of the 9th grade MSLs in ELA for *OCS* students is very similar to that of the *NCEXTEND2* ELA end-of-grade (EOG) tests and the English II End-of-Course (EOC) Test. 9th grade *OCS* teachers are encouraged to read more about the design features of the 8th grade EOG and the EOC assessments (see <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/acre/assessment/ela.pdf>).
- While the MSLs for English in *OCS* in high school do differ from *NCEXTEND2* tests in that all MSL MC items will contain four answer-choices rather than three, the same design features of the *NCEXTEND2* tests, such as simplified language and reduced reading complexity, are also present in the *OCS* tests.
- The *CCSS*-aligned MC items for 9th grade will require students to read, comprehend, and recall information to demonstrate comprehension. Also students will be expected to analyze the reading selections, identify points of view, claims, and evidence, apply concepts and skills, and make inferences.
- MSL CR items will draw from the following *CCSS* writing standard:
 - Standard 9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- To learn more about the relationship between the past *OCS* standards and the *CCSS* read <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/acre/standards/new-standards/occupational/english-crosswalk-9-10.pdf>.

Cognitive Rigor of the 11th Grade and 12th Grade MSL in English for *OCS* Students

- The questions for the 11th and 12th grade MSL for English in *OCS* were aligned to the Essential Standards using the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT). To learn more about RBT go to: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/acre/standards/>.

Types of Items

- The MSLs for the *OCS* in ELA for 9th, 11th, and 12th grades will contain four-response-option MC items.
- Each 9th grade *OCS* ELA form will consist of three reading selections: one poetry, one literary, and one informational text drawn from the domains of History/Social Studies or Science.
- Each selection will have seven to nine MC items, plus a CR item.
- Each of the three constructed response items will require brief written responses.
- In 9th grade, the three short answer CR questions will align to the *CCSS* reading standards shown in Table 1 and to writing standard 9. These CR items can typically be answered well in a sentence or two. Short answer questions will be worth 2 points each.
- While all the items in the 9th grade MSL will be tied to one of the three reading selections presented, the majority of the items in grades 11 and 12 will not be based on reading selections.
- The brief reading samples in 11th and 12th grade will contain short excerpts of text, taken from newspapers, job settings, and other real-world situations. The three short answer CR items will align to the *OCS* standards shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Testing Structure and Time

- The Common Exams for *OCS* ELA students will contain between twenty-six and thirty items. The test will be presented in two forty-five minute parts. Students will be given forty minutes to complete each part. Part one will contain MC items. Part two will contain some MC items and the CR items. Students should monitor the clock to ensure they allow themselves adequate time to respond to the questions.

Delivery Mode

- The MSLs for ELA in High School are designed for paper/pencil mode; however, some districts may choose to convert the paper/pencil test for online administration through their own online administration systems. It is a local decision to determine if the Common Exams will be administered in paper/pencil or online.